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SUBJECT: CHIRAC DEFINES FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY IN ANNUAL  
SPEECH TO AMBASSADORS

REF: A. 04 PARIS 6396

[1](#)B. 04 PARIS 6355

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt for reasons 1.4 (B & D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: President Chirac delivered a speech August 29 to France's assembled ambassadors in an annual event this year focused on France's policy toward the EU in the wake of the failed May 29 referendum on a constitutional treaty. As such, it was clearly aimed more at reassuring French citizens and France's partners than setting out new directions. In areas where French views are different from those of the U.S., Chirac toned down differences or referred to them indirectly. Noticeably absent were overtly provocative remarks directed against the United States, with Chirac stressing the EU's vocation as an equal partner of, rather than a rival to, the United States (although he never once mentioned NATO). Multipolarity received little play, but Chirac emphasized the need to strengthen UN institutions through UNSC enlargement and proposed new structures to deal with globalization. He also reiterated his proposal for an air tax and announced France's intention to host a conference to promote it. While Chirac had little new to say about Iraq or U.S. BMENA initiatives, he did say the right things about Iran by insisting that it comply with the Paris Agreement. On Turkey, he limited himself to seeking "clarification" of Turkey's intention to implement the extended customs union, without suggesting that France intended to add preconditions related to diplomatic recognition of Cyprus or to delay the beginning of accession negotiations on October 3. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) President Jacques Chirac opened on August 29 the 13th annual conference for France's nearly 200 ambassadors with a speech centered on the threats to international peace and security (terrorism, WMD proliferation, and the regional stability in the Middle East) and on next steps for the European Union following the May 29 French rejection of an EU constitutional treaty (full text faxed and emailed to EUR/WE). The European Union is indeed the main focus of this year's conference, with round tables on August 30 scheduled to take up as many as eight different EU-related themes after FM Douste-Blazy's opening remarks that morning. Chirac's comments on the upcoming scheduled accession negotiations with Turkey will be studied carefully in other EU capitals.

Iran

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[1](#)3. (U) Chirac paid only short shrift to the threat of international terrorism before moving rapidly to the proliferation threat posed by Iran. He noted that the legitimate pursuit of nuclear energy should not be a pretext for developing a military nuclear arsenal. He recalled Iran's clandestine nuclear program, enumerated European efforts to engage Iran in negotiations, and called on Iran to return to those negotiations on the basis of the Paris accords. Failure to take responsible action to reestablish confidence, he warned, would leave no choice but to seize the UN Security Council.

Middle East

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[1](#)4. (U) Chirac judged the Middle East to be the main source of regional instability in the world, stressing the importance of achieving a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He praised the efforts of both sides in evacuating the Gaza strip and called for a resumption of negotiations on the basis of the Roadmap.

[1](#)5. (U) He had little to say on Iraq, preferring to stress a "long and painful" path toward the consolidation of the country's institutions. He nonetheless cited the need to assist Iraq to maintain its territorial integrity and develop as an inclusive society. He called on other states of the region to work for stability. There was no mention whatsoever of Coalition efforts or the draft Iraqi constitution.

[1](#)6. (U) Chirac gave more attention to Lebanon, noting "exemplary" international cooperation and the need to ensure the implementation of UNSC Resolutions 1559, 1595 and 1614 in

order to restore the country's full sovereignty. Chirac refrained from direct criticism of Syria; instead, he called on Syria merely to seize the occasion to reestablish its relations with Lebanon on a new foundation in accordance with the wishes of the international community.

17. (U) On democratization and reform, Chirac saw the resolution of regional conflicts as a necessary precondition, while nonetheless calling reform inexorable. He acknowledged a new dynamic in the region, with "taboos falling" and "fear dissipating." Success, however, should be achieved through peaceful means that respect each nation's specific identity, do not lead countries into chaos, and are not imposed from the outside. Calling for true partnership with governments as well as civil society, he extolled Europe's Barcelona Process as the most appropriate way forward, citing as an example France's draft friendship treaty with Algeria.

#### Globalization and UN Reform -----

18. (U) Evoking the putative threat posed by globalization to cultural diversity, the environment, internal stability, and disparities in wealth and education, the president called for a more just and democratic collective response, to be achieved through the United Nations. He praised UNSYG Annan's proposal for consolidating the international order based on responsibility, security and solidarity, to be achieved primarily through enlargement of the UN Security Council. Chirac lauded the G-4 resolution, proposed by Germany, Brazil, India and Japan, as reflecting the need for a more regionally representative Security Council, particularly with respect to Africa. Chirac hoped for Security Council reform by the end of the year, at the latest, if not by the September summit. He called for the "association of the main powers but also the inclusion of emerging poles and regional groupings." Chirac also called for a reinforcement of global governance through the creation of an UN organization for the environment and a new structure for economic and social governance.

19. (U) On security, the president urged that proliferation, terrorism, and peace maintenance be at the center of UN discussions in New York, to include an international definition of terrorism, a commission on peace consolidation and a reinforced mechanism for the protection of human rights. Finally, on solidarity, he reiterated his proposal for an international tax on air travel -- shared, he said, by Germany, Algeria, Brazil, Chile and Spain -- and announced France's intention to host a conference in February 2006 to further that aim. He said France would contribute at a later stage to the international financing structure proposed by the UK.

110. (U) Chirac called attention to avian flu and elaborated on the preventive measures France was already taking and stated France's interest in the development of effective vaccines. On WTO, he said the December Doha round in Hong Kong would be decisive and reiterated his proposal for an immediate moratorium on agricultural export subsidies (comment: though not offering better market access or eliminating domestic subsidies) for products destined for Africa. He urged ratification of the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity by October 2006.

#### La Francophonie -----

111. (U) Chirac declared that the association of French-speaking countries, while originally aimed at preserving cultural diversity, was now directed also toward democratization and social justice. He proposed that the biannual France-Africa summit, hosted in December in Bamako, be devoted to youth and the questions of education, health, employment and security.

112. (U) On political issues, he called for free presidential elections in Cote d'Ivoire and expressed confidence in South African mediation within the framework of the African Union. There was no mention of other African countries.

#### The European Union -----

113. (U) Chirac declared that, "in this multipolar world, only the European Union has the critical mass to establish a dialogue of equals with its larger partners." He also asserted that "a strong Europe would contribute also to the vitality of the kind of balanced transatlantic linkage" -- without however any explicit mention of NATO -- "necessary for world stability and based on relations of cooperation and confidence with the United States, with whom we share so many common values." Indeed, he cites this as the reason, at this time of European crisis, to seek new European momentum.

114. (U) Acknowledging the need to bring Europe closer to its

citizens in the wake of the failed May 29 referendum on an EU constitutional treaty, Chirac called for ways to associate the parliament and local political and civil institutions with European decisions. He recalled France's shared vision, with Germany, of a Europe that is "political, ambitious, social and in solidarity" and emphasizes that Europe's vision must go beyond that of a free market (Comment: the presumed UK vision) to include a political project based on common values.

15. (U) Chirac called for a budget solution for the years 2007-2013 based on proposals of the then-Luxembourg Presidency made in June and "respect for agreements already reached" (Comment: presumably the EU's approval of the 2002 Franco-German agreement that governs the EU's Common Agricultural Policy until the end of 2013). In the same vein, he called for a harmonization of European fiscal and social policy and said France would remain "vigilant" with respect to new directives on services and the work week. He also called for the creation of "European champions" of industry and a reinforcement of economic governance within the Eurozone through a more demanding dialogue between the Eurogroup and the European Central Bank (Comment: reflecting French dissatisfaction with the constraints of the Stability Pact).

16. (U) Chirac delivered a subtle message on European enlargement, arguing indirectly that the failure of the referendum on an EU constitution and the absence of effective institutions for an enlarged Europe rendered the question of Europe's geographical limits all the more pertinent, echoing his remarks to the European Council in June. He said France would respect its past commitments as long as prospective candidate countries respected theirs. In the case of Turkey, for whom "the opening of negotiations is but a long and difficult path with an uncertain outcome," Turkey would need "to provide clarifications and assurances to the 25 about its intention to respect fully its obligations" as a result of its unilateral declaration on Cyprus.

17. (U) On ESDP, Chirac said Europe needed to make its presence felt "on all continents," and enumerated EU involvement in Bosnia, Kosovo and Darfur. Here also, there was no mention of NATO. He cited the EU's involvement in the Aceh province of Indonesia as evidence of Europe's strategic partnership with ASEAN. Finally, he called for a reinforcement of the EU's Operations Center in order better to support future autonomous operations such as those in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Artemis in 2003). He also stressed the importance of developing the EU's technological development through the European Defense Agency or through the common training of pilots and naval officers.

Wrap-Up  
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18. (U) Chirac concluded his speech with an expression of confidence in France to address its problems with unemployment and economic growth through high technology, with ITER being cited as an example of France's continuing attractiveness for investment and research.

19. (U) He concluded with a rapid tour d'horizon of the rest of the world, citing his upcoming visits to Kazakhstan and Ukraine; reinforcement of France's partnership with Russia and its strategic relations with China (he noted his plans to return to China next year), India and Japan; and his intention to visit Brazil and Chili.

Comment  
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20. (C) Chirac's speech was clearly aimed at being reassuring rather than provocative, the result of the failed May 29 referendum on the EU constitution. It is thus not surprising that he focused most of his efforts on the need to boost confidence in and stress the importance of the EU and emphasized its role as partner, rather than competitor, of the U.S. What remains to be seen is whether the current sense of EU vulnerability, and/or French weakness within the EU, leads to more or less NATO/EU competition in practice, especially if France sees increased EU purposefulness and visibility on the international scene as the primary means of offsetting its internal confusion. Chirac's remarks suggest, however, that France may be content to lie low for the moment, so long as EU equities are protected. That said, he made clear France's vision of a global role for the EU, politico-militarily as well as economically.

21. (C) Chirac's careful and relatively nuanced comments on Turkey suggest that France may in the end be satisfied with something less from Turkey than a promise to recognize Cyprus as the price of beginning accession negotiations on October 3 as planned.

22. (C) Finally, though Chirac may have had little positive

to say about Iraq, he muted his skepticism and refrained from direct criticism. His comments on Middle East reform repeated familiar French slogans on not imposing reform on the region and on working with governments vice civil society, but he did acknowledge that reform was inevitable. On Iran, by contrast, he was explicit in reiterating France's willingness to refer Iran to the UN Security Council if necessary.

123. (C) In sum, in those areas where French policy differs from that of the U.S. -- Iraq, the UN, and the EU vs. NATO -- Chirac deliberately chose to tone down his opposition or express it more indirectly. While this does not signify a change in French positions, it suggests that the government does wish to keep bilateral frictions to a minimum.

STAPLETON